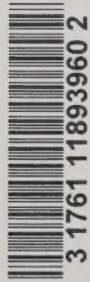


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Ontario's Health Units:

Looking after you!



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Our best customer is you

If you have ever entered a restaurant or restroom in Ontario, if you have ever used a barber shop or public swimming pool, if you have ever sent a child to school, if you have ever taken a drink from a public water supply—if you have ever done any of these things, among many others—you have benefitted from the services of an Ontario health unit.

Virtually every person in Ontario is affected by the quality of the health care

provided by these health units. Yet you, like many people, may not even be aware of the many services provided by them, or how they affect your life!

Health units help

Ontario's 44 health units exist to safeguard your health and to provide better, more comprehensive health care and advice.

The units vary widely in size, scope and available services. The smallest, in areas of sparse population, may have as few as thirty staff members; the largest may require a staff of 200 or more.



Better health
for a better life

Ministry of
Health

Hon. Frank S. Miller,
Minister

Every unit has a medical officer of health (MOH)—plus public health inspectors and nurses, as well as hearing and vision technicians. Most have, in addition, a dental health team; and many now provide the services of a nutritionist. And because each unit may provide dozens of programs and have thousands of contacts with the public each year, there is an administrative staff to keep things running smoothly.

Within the areas served by each health unit, there are a number of sub-units, each with a smaller complement of public health nurses and health inspectors, making health care available in as many communities as possible.

The invisible team

When you are sick, you see the family doctor. When you need an operation, you go into hospital. When you have a toothache, you see a dentist. All these are very visible aspects of health care today.

Unlike the doctor, the dentist or the hospital, the local health unit may seem almost invisible. Yet it plays an equally important role in maintaining your good health.

The members of each health unit work as a team. When you use the services provided by a health unit, the chances are that several people are involved—whether you know it or not. For instance, health services provided in

the schools may involve the expertise of the MOH, the nurses and nursing assistants, the dentist and dental assistants, the nutritionist, the health inspector, and various hearing and vision technicians.

Taking health to the community

It's been said that when you walk through the door of a good health unit, you'll find nothing but empty desks. An exaggeration, of course, but one with a good deal of truth! A health unit doesn't sit back and wait for trouble to happen. It goes out, into the community, looking for potential problems and ways to deal with them.

The health unit staff is in the field, working with community organizations, service groups, individuals and members of the medical profession; often working in partnership with other community agencies to improve the quality of health care to expectant parents, teenagers, handicapped and disabled persons, senior citizens, and other groups with special health needs.

A sampling of services

Naturally, there is great variety in the services offered by different health units. Much will depend upon the size of the unit and its geographical limitations. These are representative of some of the programs that may be offered:

Geriatric programs for the aged. *Maternal and child care*, basically an educational program, which may include pre-natal and parent advice, hospital liaison, or home visiting for new mothers. *Mental health care* including referral and follow-up. *Home care* for selected patients in some districts. *Family planning clinics*, which include education and counselling. *Dental health* education and screening. *Public health education* throughout the community. *V.D. control* including treatment and follow-up. *T.B. control* including screening and follow-up. *Rabies control* including vaccination and quarantine of animals. Control of *communicable diseases*. *Hearing and vision* service, occasionally with testing by appointment as well as in schools. Programs for the *handicapped*. Preventive *nutrition* counselling and education. *Immunization and vaccination* for international travel. *Occupational health problems, a program of monitoring and correction*. *Community health inspection* to keep a watchful eye on all community health situations or potential hazards. *Water supply* inspection and sampling. *Food sanitation*, with inspection and monitoring of bacteria in all areas where food is handled. *Recreational sanitation* to monitor public swimming areas. Inspection of *hospitals and institutions*. *School health programs*—often very comprehensive, including education, immunization, consultation and screening.

In addition, each health unit fields literally hundreds of complaints on a variety of health-related subjects—everything from animal bites to a lack of heat in rental quarters.

For specific information about the programs offered in your area, contact your local health unit.

The individual touch

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that your health unit exists to help *you*.

Even if your local unit doesn't have a program geared to your needs it may still be able to direct you to some organization, agency or specialist in your community who can handle your particular problem.

Your health unit is ready and willing to discuss any health-related problem. So when you need help—try us.